

## The Family

### THE SOFT GREY MOSS.

Cried the Norway Pine to the jaunty Fir,  
"Look, a moss-bud dropped on your long  
east arm;

Shake it off before it gets fastened  
there."

"Such a little thing can not do much  
harm,"

Said the Fir, and naughtily tossed his  
head.

"Oh, beware, beware," begged the Pine,  
"for I

Have seen harm enough from such tiny  
foes;

Why, because of moss, I have seen trees  
die."

"Oh, don't part with me,"

Cried the moss-bud wee,

"There is room for a million like me."

So the Fir tree laughingly let him stay,  
And the Pine grew wrinkled, and warned  
in vain;

Then came other moss-buds and found  
the Fir.

"I will bid them go when to me 'tis plain  
They are harmful things," said the willful  
tree.

Five long years have passed, and the Fir  
is dead;

For he could not shake from his arms the  
moss.

It has come to pass as the Pine tree said.  
So a little sin

Be it left within

In the battle for soul-life will win.

—Selected.

### HIS BEST BIRTHDAY.

School had closed for the day, and eager groups of laughing romping children passed noisily down the village street.

Among others were three little fellows with heads bent together discussing something which to them seemed of vast importance. The "something" in question, was a birthday party; and Lester Wilson, at whose home the party was to be held the following Saturday, in honor of his coming birthday, confidentially explained to the boys the good time in store for them.

"It's a lawn party, you know," said Lester, "and we can play lots of games, then we can fish in the creek at the foot of the lawn, and we'll have lunch out under the big chestnut tree."

"O my! but won't it be fun," cried Tommy Gates, while his little brother Tim smacked his lips in anticipation of the good time.

"Yes," replied Lester, "then in the evening Uncle Ned is going to take us for a row on the water. He'll help us play games, too. He's the 'goodest' uncle you ever saw," and Lester tossed his cap in the air, while both boys shouted "Hurrah!"

"I say," cried Lester, as they passed a little low house where a thin, pale face peered at them through the window; 'let's ask Johnny Dale to our party.'

"Let's!" exclaimed both boys, instantaneously.

"I know mamma will let me ask him," said Lester, "and wouldn't he like it!"

"But how is he to get there, he can't walk a step?" said Tommy.

"We might get Miss Brown's wheel chair now, as she don't use it any more," suggested practical Tim.

"That's it! I'll ask mamma about it when I get home," said Lester.

Soon the boys left Lester, and he wended his way on through the village, past the locust grove, then up the hill to a great white house that stood half concealed by the magnificent old trees that surrounded it.

Of course, mamma's consent was gained, the "wheel chair" procured, and Johnny invited.

"Oh, boys!" cried he, as the hot tears trickled down his pale cheeks, "what made you ask me? No one ever does."

"We thought you would like to come," said Lester.

"Course," said little Tim, laying his fat hand on the thin, pale one.

And what a jolly good time they had, to be sure! To Johnny, unaccustomed as he was to outdoor life, each object proved a source of delight. The velvety lawn that sloped to the sheet of sparkling water, the stately trees, the rich foliage, the singing of birds and the fragrance of flowers, all combined to exert an influence on his lonely, backward nature.

How the boys vied with each other in showing him a good time! And many were the quiet games indulged in that he might enjoy them with the rest.

Uncle Ned, who considered Johnny his particular charge, was unusually kind and thoughtful, and took care that he should have a prominent place in the pleasures of the day. Lester and little Tim were untiring in their devotion to him. Feathery ferns, curious pebbles and little pink shells were brought for his inspection. They liked to hear Johnny laugh—they thought he had almost forgotten how—and see the merry twinkle in his eyes, and even a faint tinge crept into his pale cheeks.

At last when the boys had all left, and Johnny had been sent home with a basket of "good things," Lester came up to Uncle Ned as he sat alone on the broad piazza, "I think this was my very best birthday, Uncle Ned," said he, "and I think Johnny liked it, too."

"I think he did," replied Uncle Ned, as he gently stroked the curly hair, "always remember, my boy, that the best pleasures we have are those we find in doing to others as you would have them do unto you."—Minnie K. Hoffman, in Lutheran Observer.

### A FLORAL SCRAP.

"Did you hear of all the trouble in the flower circus?"

"No; what was it?"

"Well, to begin with, the Tiger-Lilies boasted of the superiority of their tricks over the Dandy-Lions, and these Cat-Tails were brought to the Elephant's Ears; and it was very natural that the Dogwood tell them where the Cow's-Lips

would repeat them. That Fox-Glove was on hand although the Cock's-Comb gossip was ahead. Then everybody was inclined to linger to admire the Parrot's Feather till they heard the Cro-cus like a trooper, and all hands got a fatherly lecture from the Poppy Flower."—Washington Herald.

### A GAME FOR TWO.

While their mother was sick, Ted and Jimmy were spending two weeks in the country at Uncle Joe's. He was a fine uncle, they both thought; but much of the time he was busy with his writing, and then the hours hung heavy. The novelty of the little farm was worn off; there was no place to fish; and the only horse on the place was Uncle Joe's own saddle-horse, too powerful for small boys to be trusted alone with. Uncle Joe knew all this, and he was not surprised on the third morning to be roused from work by Ted, who entered and sat down with a gloomy sigh.

"What's the matter?" he inquired.

"I want to play baseball, Uncle Joe."

"Why don't you?"

"There's only Jimmy and me, and two can't. There's—there's more fun in places where there's a lot of boys, don't you think, Uncle Joe?" Ted spoke delicately, for he did not wish to hurt his uncle's feelings; but Uncle Joe understood. He always had a way of understanding the boys. "You might play wall-ball," he suggested.

"What's that?" inquired his nephew.

"You need," said Uncle Joe, "a ball, not too hard, four barrel-staves, a shingle, and the back of a woodshed."

Ted's eyes opened wide. "Sounds like a funny game!"

"You get the barrel-staves, and I'll come out and show you," replied his uncle.

When the staves, the shingle, and Jimmy were collected, Uncle Joe sharpened one end of three of the staves and stuck them in the ground edgewise in a row a foot apart about five feet out from the woodshed. Then he laid the shingle across their tops. The fourth staff he shaved down neatly for a third of its length, and then wrapped the cut part in cloth.

"That's the bat," he explained, "and the cloth is put on so that it won't hurt your hands."

"We've got a good bat, Uncle Joe," said Ted. But Uncle Joe laughed.

"Not so good as this for wall-ball," he said. Then he stationed Ted, with the bat, a yard in front of the three staves and the shingle.

"Now," he explained, "Jimmy shall pitch to you; but he must stand back of this line." He marked a line about forty feet from the shed. "If you miss the ball, and it knocks off the shingle, you are out, and Jimmy bats. If you hit it, in any direction, you must run to that tree and back, and you count as many runs as you can make trips before Jimmy can either throw the ball so as to knock off the shingle, or can stand on the home base with the ball. But if he catches it on the fly, or reaches the home base with